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ABSTRACT

Students Creating Optimal Resources for Employment (Project SCORE) was a three-year grant implemented by Massachusetts' Springfield Technical Community College to develop a model for increasing job opportunities and enhancing the career prospects of students and graduates with disabilities. Project activities included individual academic and career student services, such as resume and cover letter writing, job search and referrals, job shadowing, career counseling, practice interviews, volunteer placements, course scheduling, and accommodations; group student services, including career exploration and job-seeking skills courses; faculty and staff services, such as assistance with the academic advisement, counseling, and job placement of students with disabilities; and employer services, including technical consultation on job accommodations, adaptive technology, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and disability etiquette and awareness. Project SCORE resulted in a significant increase of the competitive employment rate of participants, while it was determined that the most effective practices were those that were agreed upon in one-to-one meetings with students, established individualized programs and objectives, and worked individually with students to achieve those objectives. Appendixes include sample record keeping forms for counseling sessions, placement, internships, and disability accommodation services, as well as project statistics. (TGI)

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ED 400 864

Project S.C.O.R.E.

(Students Creating Optimal Resources for Employment)

Best Practices

Springfield Technical Community College
Springfield, Massachusetts

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October 10, 1996

This report is written according to the *Guideline for Developing a Final Report*,
by R. Stake and L. DeStefano
of the Transition Institute of Illinois's Evaluation Technical Assistance Program

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CONTENTS

A. Executive Brief

B. Conclusions

Services to Students

Individual

Career

Resume
Cover Letter
Job Search/Referrals (Case Example)
Job Shadowing
Career Counseling
Practice Interviews
Volunteer Placements (Case Examples)

Academic

Scheduling
Accommodations
Referrals
Adaptive Computing Lab
LD Counselor
Community Services

Group

Career Exploration Course
Job-Seeking Skills Course

Services to College Faculty and Staff

Academic Advisement
Counseling
Placement

Services to Employers

Job Accommodations
Adaptive Technology
ADA Information
Disability Etiquette and Awareness

Documentation/Record-Keeping

A. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Students Creating Optimal Resources for Employment (Project SCORE, 1993 - 1996) was a 3-year grant to Springfield Technical Community College in Springfield, MA, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. The primary purpose of the Project, which was a collaborative effort of the community, the College at large, and the College's Offices of Cooperative Education and Disability Services, was the development of a model for increasing job opportunities and enhancing career prospects of students and graduates with disabilities. The Project empowered students with disabilities to identify and pursue career opportunities; assisted faculty and staff in academic advisement, counseling, and job placement of students with disabilities; and sought to provide employers with technical consultation on job accommodation, adaptive technologies, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and disability awareness and etiquette.

Project activities included intensive, one-to-one, person-centered career counseling, Career Planning and Job Seeking Skills courses, job development, training of employers and College faculty and staff, and dissemination of Project findings through professional journals and trainings. Project staff were assisted in pursuing Project goals through bimonthly meetings with the Project Advisory Team, which drew volunteer members from the private sector, federal and state agencies, and College departments.

The main indicator of the Project's efficacy was the rate of placement in competitive employment of 1995 graduates. The competitive employment rate of Project beneficiaries (Experimental Groups) was compared with that of students with disabilities who did not accept Project services (Control Group). Among respondents to mail and telephone surveys by the Project and by the College's Office of Cooperative Education/Career Services and Transfer Affairs, a significant increase in rate of full-time employment was achieved by the Experimental Groups. Twenty-two percent (22%) of Control Group respondents reported full-time employment, while forty-five percent (45%) of Group 1 and forty percent (40%) of Group 2 reported full-time employment. Data on part-time employment was taken but not analyzed due to complications in reportage. Many cohorts reported multiple employers with different wage rates. There were also many reports of fluctuating numbers of hours per week spent working. Others reported part-time self-employment with no definite data on compensation.

Final Employment Data

	Number Respond-ing	# Empl. FT	% Empl. FT	Avg. Hrly FT Wage	Range of FT Wages	# Empl. PT	% Empl PT
Gp 1	22 of 50	10	45%	$9.06	$6.00-$14.90	6	27%
Gp 2	20 of 40	8	40%	$10.53	$7.25-$17.89	4	20%
Cntl	18 of 50	4	22%	$10.82	$6.79-$15.00	4	22%

While the Experimental Groups achieved higher rates of full-time competitive employment, the Control Group (receiving no Project services) appears to have achieved a higher rate of pay. This apparent disparity, however, may be attributable more to the low rate of reporting from the Control Group than to any actual career achievement, since, of the 4 cohorts reporting full-time employment, only 3 reported rates of pay. The lowness of this figure increases its vulnerability to distortion as a bellwether of the entire Control population. All of the Experimental Groups' respondents reported their pay rates.

Moreover, an additional set of data needs consideration: the percentages of students continuing their educations at 4-year colleges. Due to the impact of this status on short-term employment outcomes, students entering this category were removed from the 3 groups for separate analysis. One student from the original Control Group continued to a 4-year college but had to be removed from that group's data for having sought and accepted services from the Project.

Continuance in Full-time Education
at a 4-Year College

	Number	Percent
Group 1	6	12%
Group 2	2	5%
Control	0	0%

The elevated percentages in the above tables were accomplished through individual and group sessions addressing academic issues (referrals, accommodations, supportive counseling), career exploration (library research, referrals to job shadowing experiences and self-assessment of personal values, strengths, weaknesses), and job seeking skills (practice interviews, resume and cover letter preparation, and referrals to volunteer opportunities and paid job openings).

To complement these person-centered services, the Project also provided trainings to faculty, placement officials, and employers. Faculty trainings centered on services provided by Project SCORE and the Office of Disability Services, classroom accommodations, alternate testing methods, available adaptive technology, and legal issues. Training for placement professionals consisted of a presentation to a statewide meeting of placement officers from community colleges and public 4-year institutions, as well as dissemination to community college placement officers throughout New York State and New England of the *Best Practices* document and the award-winning 17-minute video *You Can Get There From Here*, which was produced by the Project.

Project beneficiaries were students and graduates of Springfield Technical Community College who had one or more documented disabilities (physical/medical, learning, psychiatric, hearing, visual, substance abuse). Services offered to employers were a conference on legal issues around the Americans with Disabilities Act and staff trainings on disability awareness and etiquette. The Project also provided employers with informational mailings on disability issues. In summary, services to students and graduates produced high quality outcomes. College faculty responded positively to trainings; they subsequently increased referrals and requests for consults. Project staff found individual contacts with private employers were productive and well-received, in some cases leading to disability awareness trainings in privately-owned workplaces.

Best Practices

What Worked Well	*What Didn't Work Well*
Individual counseling on career planning and job-seeking skills	Group instruction
Recruitment of private non-profit and government employers	Recruitment of private for-profit employers
Recruitment of employers on behalf of particular students, offering the specialized skills of those students	Recruitment on behalf of the Project
Individual person-to-person contact with employers/supervisors	Regional conferences
Collaboration with other agencies and existing college services	
Giving resumes of counselees to Project Advisory Team members	
Case presentations to Project Advisory Team	
Presenting to faculty by placing Project on the agendas of scheduled department meetings	Arranging special meeting times
Open Houses to introduce technology of Adaptive Computing Lab	Scheduled appointments for information sessions
Individual counseling focusing on individual strengths and skills	Job development
Spreadsheets	Hand-written or word-processed charts and records
Development of program evaluation instruments in early months of Project	Development of program evaluation instruments in final year of Project

B. CONCLUSIONS

Some services were delivered in various contexts and using various methods. This factor provided an opportunity to evaluate techniques and methods based on results. For example, group instruction in Career Exploration and Job Seeking Skills did not yield the results that were developed through individual counseling on the same subjects. The generic service-delivery program that was conceptualized originally did not meet the unique sets of needs of most students. The most effective services were those that were agreed upon in one-to-one meetings with individual students, establishing individualized programs of objectives, and working individually with students to achieve those objectives.

Services to Students

Individual

A consensus developed among Project staff that working in individual counseling sessions was far more productive and effective than working with groups. Individualized work, by its nature, addresses specific personal concerns and arrives at useful closure more efficiently and expeditiously than generic programming. For the most part, services consisted of resume and cover letter preparation, job search assistance, placement in volunteer and job shadowing experiences, practice interviews, and career, academic, and personal counseling. The following chart details by academic year the numbers of students who accepted individual services over the course of the Project. Counseling sessions were scheduled in 1-hour blocks. Some sessions, of course, ran shorter, while others ran longer. The numbers in the columns do not quantify the amount of time spent with each student in the service area - only the number of students accepting that service. Most service deliveries required far more than one session per student.

Numbers of Students Accepting Services										
Acad Year	Resume	Cover Ltr	Job Srch	Vol Plac't	Job Shdw	Career Couns	Prac I'vw	Acad Couns	Pers Couns	Ttls
93-94	19	17	24	3	0	19	9	17	3	111
94-95	42	27	72	11	2	34	2	30	10	230
95-96	28	22	40	13	5	33	4	38	17	200

Career

Resume

Most program beneficiaries had never prepared a resume before, and those who had prepared resumes showed papers with serious flaws. Some believed that they should go to a resume-writing agency or that they could have a friend or family member write a resume for them. The reply to these notions was that there is only one person on earth with all of the information that needs to be on your resume - *you* - so the job cannot be delegated. Moreover, after your birth certificate, a resume is the most important document of your life, since it is going to be a crucial factor in determining the quality of the rest of your life. It was explained to students that they had to put the information on paper, then the Project Counselor's job would be to edit it down to one page in a professional format.

After screening a number of tools for resume preparation, ***The Perfect Resume***, by Tom Jackson (New York: Doubleday, 1990) was chosen. The Project bought 4 copies ($12.00 each), which were lent out to students as they needed them. The Project seldom had more than one copy on hand, and frequently there was a wait. On taking the book, students were told that they would not use the entire book - just certain sections of it. They were warned, however, that they would need between 20 and 40 hours to generate a rough draft.

The student used the book to generate several hand-written pages. The student and Counselor then began the editing process together. This process usually required 3 one-hour sessions to organize the information into final professional form. In most cases, Project staff recommended adding a separate COMPUTER SKILLS section. Some students divided this further into Hardware and Software categories. The Project Counselor recommended against specifying a CAREER OBJECTIVE because this could result in disqualification from consideration for transitional positions that could be used to earn income while continuing the search for the ideal or "dream" job.

Students responded well to the instrument. Some reported that the self-evaluation process elicited by the text was positively therapeutic - that they came away from the experience with a new view of the depth and range of their experiences and skills and an elevated confidence in their employability.

The Project Counselor also suggested to students that they have a sheet of 3 professional references to take to interviews as well as a sheet of 3 personal references. Each student was also given a 2-pocket folder with a suggestion of putting some copies of the resume and references lists in it and keeping it in a place where it is always handy (car, briefcase, etc.) so that they can be placed in the hands of a prospective employer or contact on immediate notice.

This intensive, one-to-one, person-centered service was not available from any other office on campus or from any community agency. The Career Placement Office staff offered editorial advice on existing resumes, but they simply did not have the time resources required to work intensively with individual students on developing the content of a professional resume from scratch.

Cover Letters

Most students came into the job search process with no experience in writing cover letters. Some believed that one generic cover letter would suffice for all applications. Others had no idea of the purpose of the cover letter. The Project Counselor's approach was to tell students to find one or more advertisements for jobs that they were interested in. They then sat down together with the advertisements and drafted succinct cover letters specifically addressing the requirements listed by the employers. The Counselor pointed out the formulaic systematic nature of the cover letter, and most students were independent with this set of skills by the 4th letter.

Perhaps the most important piece of information concerning cover letters was about disclosure of disability. Most students believed initially that the cover letter was the appropriate opportunity to introduce the issue. These students were supplied with cautionary information suggesting that the issue be broached only when necessary to transact business - either in making the interview appointment or in the interview if an accommodation would be required.

Some students had limited keyboarding/computer skills, so they were introduced to Microsoft Works 3.0 with suggestions of left justification of the complimentary close, the signature block and both addresses. Students were also directed to the Career Placement Office's file of individuals and agencies that accept payment for pre-press work on resumes and cover letters.

Job Search/Referrals

The Project Counselor used to meet with students at the local office of the state Department of Employment and Training to show them how to get necessary information as efficiently as possible from the DET's job referral computer. In the Project catchment area, however, the DET was replaced, in the Project's final year, by private contractors. The Counselor

then met with students at whichever agency was more convenient for them, and the students registered for agency orientations and services. They also met in various libraries to study the *Help Wanteds* in the region's newspapers. The Counselor also studied these ads and called students on finding something for which they might have qualified. In most cases of students being called about these job advertisements, they had not previously noticed them. Two students got jobs (one full-time, one part-time) after the Project Counselor referred their attention to newspaper advertisements.

In the 94-95 and 95-96 academic years, the Project Counselor scheduled appointments and reserved office space for students to be interviewed by a traveling representative from the President's Commission on Employment of People with Disabilities, in Washington, DC. While these interviews took place in the late winters of 2 successive years - 1995 and 1996 - the work of publicizing and managing began in the previous Novembers. These employment opportunities were advertised by flyer and campus newsletter at STCC. Disability Services Officers at 3 other area colleges were also invited to recruit applicants. Three STCC students with disabilities interviewed successfully in 1996 and accepted full-time summer employment with various federal agencies in Massachusetts. One of these employees is a cohort of one of the experimental groups and is, therefore, counted as a placement in the study data. The other 2 employees, however, were not members of the study, so their placements are not counted in the study data.

Additionally, the College's career placement office is located adjacent to Disability Services, and job seekers were shown how to use that office's system of job listings. They were also introduced to the clerk who registered them to receive direct-mailing of job announcements in their fields.

Students were encouraged to continue their existing relationships with service-delivery agencies, since many of the staff of these agencies have numerous productive contacts among the employer community in the region.

The Project's Career Counselor also encouraged students to apply for jobs that were outside their career objectives. When they were hired into these nonpreferred positions, the search for the career objective position was continued while emphasizing to students that the transitional job is another opportunity for networking. Moreover, it is always easier, for a variety of reasons, to find a job if you already have one.

Job Shadowing

Job shadowing enabled students to get an on-site experience with particular specialties by spending time (usually 1/2 or one full day) at work with people who were actually employed in the fields that the students were interested in exploring. These experiences were invaluable in the career decision-making process. Students come away from them with one of 3 reactions:

1. reaffirmation of the career objective, or
2. need to investigate the career more carefully, or
3. definite aversion to the career.

Job shadowing experiences were recommended to all students who had no or limited experience in the career fields that they had identified. Together, an individual student and the Project Counselor started by identifying some organizations that provided opportunities in the student's prospective career field. The Counselor then phoned an organization to find someone who could provide the job shadow experience. Due to confidentiality issues, the student was not named in the telephone conversation, but the Counselor self-identified by name and phone number and told the cooperating person that the student would send a letter proposing the job

shadow. The student then wrote a letter (sometimes with the Counselor's assistance) to the cooperating individual referring to the Counselor by name and requesting the courtesy of the job shadowing experience.

The value of these experiences was not limited to students who had just begun their educations. They were also helpful to people who had completed, or were about to complete, their academic work and had many job options.

Career Counseling

Some students requested assistance in identifying possible careers. The Project Counselor started by asking them what they did for recreation, and they brainstormed ideas around those subjects. The student wrote these in the Possible Careers row of the Weighted Values Scale for Career Decision-making (Appendix 1). The student also named some values that were personally important, and these were listed in the Important Values column of the Weighted Values Scale for Career Decision-making. The Counselor then accompanied the student to the career resources section of the school library, where the student identified information sources and researched the possible careers. The student looked at each identified career in terms of her/his own personal values and assigned numerical ratings to the intersections of the career choices and the important values. After researching and evaluating, the student added the numbers in each column. If the fields had been defined accurately and evaluated objectively, the career choices with the higher numerical totals would be more agreeable than those with lower numerical values.

Students with disabilities were also referred to the College's Career Counselors for testing and counseling. The students could then compare their individually developed data with that from standardized instruments.

Practice Interviews

Many counselees faced their job searches in their new careers with no prior experience of professional interviews. In these cases the Project's Career Counselor arranged for them to come in for practice interviews that were conducted exactly as actual interviews. The Counselor specified beforehand that several factors would be evaluated:

1. punctuality,
2. dress and grooming,
3. personal interaction,

4. quality of answers to questions, and

5. quality of questions posed by interviewee.

The Project Counselor did not prescribe specific clothing to be worn by the interviewees. However, students were given a formula to help them to decide on what is appropriate for an interview: The Counselor told them to think back on their experiences in their new fields (job shadows, information interviews, *etc.*) and decide what is appropriate workplace clothing. After deciding that, they go one notch up, dressing slightly more formally than they would for the workplace.

Students were also given lists of typical questions that interviewers ask, and it was suggested that they have a one- or two-sentence answer for each of the questions on the lists. Some of these answers required rehearsal. Students were also given another list of questions - ones that an interviewee may legitimately ask of an interviewer. It was suggested that the students rehearse three or four to have ready. After the practice interview, the Counselor and the student critiqued the student's performance. Sometimes more practices were indicated. Many people who have never been through interviews before find them a daunting prospect, and the feedback on the usefulness of the practice interviews was overwhelmingly positive. The Project also videotaped some of these practice interviews with the permission of the interviewees. This gave students an expanded opportunity for self-criticism. The feedback on the videotaping was also overwhelmingly positive.

Volunteer Placements (Case Abstracts)

When students expressed unwillingness to accept unpaid work, it was emphasized that volunteer experiences are networking opportunities. Moreover, students were also encouraged to accept only high-quality career-step volunteer positions.

These experiences paid off directly for some students. V-, for instance, had been in the English as a Second Language program and was taking computer and civil engineering courses to increase his professional-domain language skills. In his native country he had been a supervising engineer on major construction projects. Here, however, he was having difficulty finding responsible work in his field at any level. He had sat for the Massachusetts Construction Supervisors Licensing Exam but failed due to having to translate the questions into his native language and the answers back into English. The testing agency refused to allow an accommodation of extra time. He accepted a volunteer position in the Engineering Department of the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Northampton, MA, which offered an opportunity to interact daily with professionals in his field. His professional-domain language skills developed to the point that he passed the Construction Supervisors Exam with no accommodations. V-'s colleagues in the Engineering Department have been helpful in rewriting his resume to address engineering skills and in developing a base of information for sending resumes and cover letters.

J- was a student in the Microcomputer Specialist program and volunteered to do a project between semesters at the local chapter of the American Red Cross. Four months after J-'s graduation, the vendor for most of the computer services purchased by that chapter noticed the project that he had done and asked for a resume. J- was hired full-time by

that company. (Note: Project SCORE had tried earlier to recruit that same computer services company as a cooperating employer for volunteer placements. However, that company would only use volunteers to unload trucks and do repetitive hardware set-up. Since this did not meet the learning or career needs of any Project SCORE beneficiaries, no one was referred. This emphasizes that the volunteer experience must be a career step.)

In soliciting employers to accept volunteers, it was explained that the students and graduates were highly skilled and would work with a minimum of supervision: the Project did not want these experiences to be burdensome to supervisors. When an employer expressed a need for a volunteer, all counselees who could qualify were contacted. They in turn sent resumes and cover letters to the prospective cooperating supervisor, who screened and selected the qualifying ones. The supervisor then contacted the prospective volunteers to arrange interviews. If one interviewed successfully, the Project SCORE Career Counselor met with both parties together to establish and clarify the expectations of both the supervisor and the volunteer. The Counselor wrote these down (Appendix 2) and gave both a copy. The Counselor kept the original. At the end of the first day the Counselor phoned the supervisor to ask how things went and log the response (Appendix 3). If the student's performance was satisfactory, another phone call was made at the end of the first week. If things were still satisfactory, phone contacts were made periodically thereafter. If performance was not satisfactory at the end of the first day, the Counselor asked the supervisor if s/he wished to terminate. If not, the Counselor phoned again at the end of the second day. If performance was still unsatisfactory, termination was recommended. On all contacts supervisors were reminded that the Counselor was a resource with the responsibility of providing support for making the placement a success. Finally, at the close of the volunteer experiences, supervisors were asked to

fill in an evaluation of the volunteer (Appendix 4). This was the **only** piece of paperwork that supervisors were asked to fill out, and it took less than 3 minutes. This was one feature of the program that was emphasized to employers during attempts to recruit them.

In spite of numerous attempts to recruit private for-profit organizations as cooperating employers for volunteers, the Project succeeded in recruiting only one. The employer was a member of the Project Advisory Team and approached the Project's Career Counselor with the information about the opening. He needed a computerization intern in his Human Resources Department. Coincidentally, the Career Counselor had the resume of a foreign student majoring in Computer Information Systems. This student had been a personnel officer for a major employer in Nairobi, Kenya. His F-1 (student) visa status made it impossible for him to accept pay for work, but he wanted to get field experience to apply his new skills. He designed the templates that his cooperating employer used to convert from paperwork to computerization.

While this last case illustrates how useful volunteer placements with private for-profit employers can be to students, it must be emphasized that this case is extraordinary. Of the various types of organizations that were approached, for-profit organizations provided the greatest challenge in finding volunteer placements. (See chart below.) At the same time, however, this case illustrates that the Project advisory team members' assistance to the Project is not limited strictly to advising - that they can also be helpful in pursuing and implementing Project objectives. Counselors who have access to any such group should consider providing all of its members with resumes of students who are looking for placements. Networking with other private for-profit employers directly through advisory team members could prove productive, since progressive employers are likely to be in contact with other progressive employers.

Project SCORE Volunteer Placements

Type of Organization	Number solicited	Number that accepted at least 1 volunteer	Total number of volunteers placed
Private For-profit	56	1	1
Private Nonprofit	22	2	3
Federal Government	3	1	3
State Government	8	2	3
County/Municipal Government	17	2	2
Individual	1	1	1

Academic

Due to the nature of certain disabilities, some students have special scheduling needs concerning their academic classes. A student who uses a motorized wheelchair, for example, might not be able to travel in time between two successive classes if they are at a great distance from each other and require waiting for elevators for access and egress. Students with learning disabilities, on the other hand, may require careful selection and balancing of courses to avoid an overload of text reading in any semester. Someone with a reading comprehension problem, for instance, should avoid taking Sociology, Anthropology, Literature, and Economics simultaneously. Reading-intensive courses need to be balanced with courses in which grading is based on performance. For purposes of financial aid and other subsidization, some students can qualify for consideration as full-time students while taking fewer than 12 semester

hours if they provide documentation of the feasibility of academic success at a reduced study load.

Classroom and testing accommodations are recommended and granted on a case-by-case basis. Project SCORE staff worked with other College staff on a form that is provided to concerned faculty when an accommodation is required to assure the success of the student without compromising academic standards (Appendix 5). Students must provide professional documentation of the disability and its implications for academic success before any accommodation is requested from faculty. Moreover, students are advised to begin the accommodations procedure as long as possible **before** the beginning of the semester so that appropriate staff can be recruited and materials can be acquired by the time classes begin.

In order to remain within the charge of the grant and to devote the maximum possible time resource to its fulfillment, Project staff frequently referred students with disabilities to existing College and community resources. One of these resources was the Adaptive Computing Laboratory and its staff. The lab had hardware, software, and tutorial assistance for people with learning, orthopedic, and visual disabilities. Students with Learning Disabilities met with the school's Learning Disabilities Specialist to plan tactics and strategies for academic success. Students lacking documentation were referred to community agencies, as were students with disabilities requiring treatment or therapy that was outside the expertise of Project staff.

Group

Project staff felt that, on the whole, group instruction was not nearly as effective as individual counseling sessions. This was due partly to the nature of the disabilities of some class enrollees whose disabilities made it difficult for them to participate productively in group discussions/interactions. Many students could have achieved their goals more efficiently and quickly through individual work with a Counselor and became impatient with the pace of the class work. Originally, staff developed a 3-credit course on career exploration and job-seeking skills. This course was well-attended in its first 3 semesters, which included one summer session. In practice, however, this form proved clumsy because people do not typically develop a career goal and try to get a job in that career in a semester's time. Consequently, the course work was divided to provide 2 different study options: Career Exploration (1 credit - nondegree) and Job Seeking Strategies (2 credits - degree applicable). Subsequent enrollments in both courses declined progressively to the point that in the final semester that the courses were offered there were only 2 students in Career Exploration and none in Job Seeking Strategies. Two factors may have been operating here: 1) cost - students had to pay full per-credit tuition, and 2) maturity of demand cycle - demand for these courses may well be of a cyclical nature with demand diminishing after 1 1/2 semesters and increasing again at some later time. This is not an unusual phenomenon in Adult Education.

Career Exploration Class

The Career Exploration course went through a series of revisions before reaching its final form . The course was never heavily attended, and the last enrollment consisted of two students. As far as quality of instruction time and benefits to students, it seemed that the fewer enrollees there were, the better. One reason for this is probably the greater opportunity for personalization and individualization. The class met 10 times per semester, 1 and 1/2 hours per session, and, in its final form,

closely matched the content and procedure of individual counseling sessions. There were no prerequisites, and writing assignments were minimal, as were readings. The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (Briggs, K. and Myers, I. (1993) Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.) was the only standardized instrument used throughout the life of this course. Some students with learning disabilities had difficulty with subtleties of connotation of some of the vocabulary. This problem was resolved by requiring the students to do the task in class with the teacher accepting questions about the vocabulary of the test. *SIGI PLUS* (Educational Testing Service - 1993) was originally a required activity of the course. Teaching staff, however, found it to work well with some students and poorly with others, particularly students with attentional problems. It was recommended according to individual need.

Job Seeking Skills Class

Group instruction format was entirely appropriate for some of the topics addressed in this course . It was particularly effective in eliciting discussion of responsibilities and rights of job applicants and employees with disabilities. It also worked well for discussions of workplace accommodations, disclosure of disabilities, and for talks by motivational speakers. There were some objectives, however, to which group instruction did not lend itself well. This was particularly true of resume preparation, filling in of job applications, and practice interviews. The commonality here seems to be the personal/individual nature of the activities requiring individual attention. As a supplementary text, Project staff developed a "Job Seeking Skills Handbook" with sections on job search planning, resumes, cover letters, interviewing, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and job accommodations.

Services to College Faculty/Staff

There was a perception among Project staff that faculty were in need of information on disability issues to increase their effectiveness in providing students with disabilities with academic advisement, job placement advice and referrals, and counseling in general. Therefore, in the first weeks of the Project, staff developed a plan to offer the Project's services directly to faculty. Presentations were placed on the agendas of the regularly-scheduled meetings of every division every semester. In this manner, all full-time faculty members received disabilities trainings, the purposes of which were to:

1. inform faculty of the existence and purposes of Project SCORE,
2. offer assistance on developing classroom accommodations,
3. solicit faculty assistance in job placement of students with disabilities, and
4. educate faculty on viability of workplace accommodations.

Some of these trainings were co-presented with staff from the College's Office of Cooperative Education/Career Services and Transfer Affairs.

Following these presentations there was an increase in faculty referring students to the Office of Disability Services in general and to Project SCORE in particular. Faculty members also expressed more concern for and awareness of academic and workplace accommodations. This issue of workplace accommodations is particularly important because many employers contact faculty directly to request applicants when they have employment openings. These trainings and information sessions will continue to have an impact on job placement of students with disabilities long after the expiration of the grant, as faculty are now empowered to advocate personally for and intercede directly in behalf of students with disabilities.

Services to Employers

Proposals of Project services to employers included offers of free consultative services and staff trainings in 4 areas:

1. job accommodation,
2. ADA compliance,
3. adaptive technology, and
4. disability awareness and etiquette.

Three trainings were delivered, and one more is pending. All are awareness and etiquette trainings. Many more employers expressed a need for these services, particularly disability awareness and etiquette.

The Project independently organized a regional employers conference on ADA legal issues. However, it was canceled for low attendance. Project staff managed a regional mass-mailing of literature on ADA legal issues, disability etiquette, and job accommodation resources to employers as an alternative means of communicating this information. The Project also mailed questionnaires to over 450 employers in the region. This effort yielded a response rate of approximately 7 percent, though there was no discernible consensus among the respondents as to a conference theme. Project staff subsequently developed a conference on ADA legal issues in cooperation with the Employers Association of Western Massachusetts. It is scheduled for November of 1996.

Adaptive technology is an area in which very few employers have any knowledge, and verbal descriptions of the technology available in the Project's Adaptive Computing Laboratory did not seem to carry a great deal of meaning. Most employers seemed skeptical or disinterested. The consensus among Project staff, however, was that if employers could be shown the hardware and software personally, and even let them try it out, they would be much more receptive and responsive to disability issues. Consensus among the Project staff on this prospect is that the equipment must go to the employers, rather than inviting the employers to come and see the equipment. This approach would also allow the employers' staffs to become familiar with the technology with minimal

disruption of business. Project staff agreed that contacting employers individually and making appointments to take the equipment into their work places to show them its power would be far more likely to elicit positive responses - for the trainings themselves and to employment applications of people with disabilities.

Documentation/Record-keeping

Project staff kept hand-written logs of contacts with employers and Project beneficiaries. However, this system did not meet the need to quantify data. A system of index cards for recording placement specifics was helpful in keeping information on individuals, but the most effective system for recording data and summoning it for reference, change, or analysis proved to be a spreadsheet. The Project adopted Microsoft *Excel* as a tool that is both user-friendly and widely available. The spreadsheet offers a number of advantages for record-keeping:

1. up-dating information - as many additional (horizontal) rows as necessary can be added easily as new information on individuals develops;
2. quantifiable data can be computed automatically by the software;
3. identifying information can be deleted or hidden prior to print-out to protect privacy;
4. print-outs are in an easily-read chart form which can be imported into a compatible word processing program.

The spreadsheet is useful not only for keeping placement and academic information on students (Appendices 6 and 7) but also for keeping service-delivery data (Appendix 8).

RATINGS:
0 - 10
Lowest Highest

Your IMPORTANT VALUES	POSSIBLE CAREERS						
30							
TOTALS							

Appendix 1

Springfield Technical Community College
Counseling Center

Project SCORE

Date:_____

Counselor:_____

Supervisor's expectations:_____

Student's expectations:_____

Appendix 2

Signed:

_____ _____

(Supervisor) (Student)

Springfield Technical Community College
Counseling Center

Project SCORE

Placement Follow-up

Date:_____

Counselor:_____

First Day: _____

Second Day or First Week: _____

Date: _____

SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PROJECT SCORE - OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

RECORD OF INTERNSHIP

INTERN: _____

EMPLOYER: _____

INTERN PERIOD: From: _____ To: _____

SUPERVISOR: _____

	Excellent	Acceptable	Needs to Improve	N/A
ATTITUDE:				
Cooperative	_____	_____	_____	_____
Motivated	_____	_____	_____	_____
JUDGEMENT:				
Mature	_____	_____	_____	_____
Independent	_____	_____	_____	_____
DEPENDABILITY:				
Minimum Supervision	_____	_____	_____	_____
Follows Directions	_____	_____	_____	_____
QUALITY OF WORK:				
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____	_____
Consistency	_____	_____	_____	_____
ORGANIZATION:				
Concentration	_____	_____	_____	_____
Self-Starting	_____	_____	_____	_____
DEMEANOR:				
Professional	_____	_____	_____	_____
Confident	_____	_____	_____	_____
FLEXIBILITY:				
Adapts to changes	_____	_____	_____	_____
APPEARANCE:				
Appropriate Dress	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grooming	_____	_____	_____	_____
PUNCTUALITY:				
Attendance	_____	_____	_____	_____
On Time	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: _____

_____

Springfield Technical Community College
Disability Services Office
Building 27, 2nd Floor

Kindly refer to policy statement on back.

To:_____ Date:_____

From:_____ ext._____

Student:_____ SSN:_____ Class:_____Section:___

This student has come to us seeking support services due to a documented disability. The following are recommended accommodations:

Classroom:

__ Preferential seating (specify)_____ __ Tape recorder
__ Beverage in classroom __ Assistive listening device
__ Sign language interpreter __ Note taker _____
__ Other (specify)_____

Testing:

__ Extended time: time & a half double time other: _____
__ Distraction-free space (can be in Disability Services Office)_____
__ Reader _____
__ Large print _____
__ Scribe _____
__ Equipment (available in Disability Services Office):
- __ Word processor with spell checker
- __ Speech input computer
- __ Magnification system
  - __ MAGIC
  - __ Closed-circuit TV

We encourage all students to meet with their instructors to discuss their specific needs, strengths, and learning styles. We hope that it will be possible for you to arrange academic accommodations directly with the student. If you have any questions, please call me at 781-7822, ext. 3884.

_____ _____
Student Counselor

Springfield Technical Community College is mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide accommodations to students with disabilities. Our office assists faculty and staff in provision of appropriate modifications for students with disabilities.

Appendix 5

Springfield Technical Community College
Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

Disability Services Office

Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may be eligible for testing accommodations. In order to establish this eligibility, the student must provide clear documentation of the disability, which is then kept on file in the Disability Services Office. Appropriate accommodation will be determined by Disability Services staff in consultation with department faculty. Possible accommodations include extended testing time, reader service, scribe service, oral answering, adaptive equipment, modification of format, and environmental control. The specific accommodation(s) agreed upon will be in writing with copies going to student, instructor, and Disability Services Office.

Procedures for Taking Accommodated Exams

1. Setting up accommodations - on receiving verification of eligibility for accommodation, the student and instructor discuss method(s) of examination. The following are examples of successful prior implementations:
    A. With the instructor's permission, the student can take the exam in the Disability Services Office during the regular class time or an alternative period. DSO can provide a quiet location and a reader or a scribe. **Proctoring is not available.**
    B. The student can take the exam in a Division office or classroom, providing that the space is free of interruptions and the instructor or a department designee is available.

2. Transfer of Exam - the following are acceptable methods of transferring an exam to and from the Disability Services Office:
    A. The instructor fills in an EXAM CHECKLIST and seals it in an envelope with a copy of the exam. The instructor signs her/his name across the seal on the envelope. The student delivers the sealed envelope to the secretary of the DSO. The student is assigned a room and takes the exam according to the instructor's specifications on the EXAM CHECKLIST. The finished exam is returned to the instructor in the same secure manner as above.
    B. The instructor may personally deliver the exam to (and pick it up from) the DSO.
    C. A workstudy student may pick up the sealed exam and EXAM CHECKLIST from the instructor and return it after it has been sealed and signed by a DSO staff person.

3. Student's Responsibilities:
    A. Meet with instructor(s) and discuss exam arrangements and necessary accommodations before the beginning of the semester.
    B. Arrange to take exams as closely as possible to in-class exam times.
    C. Schedule necessary exam space with Disability Services Office at least one week in advance.
    D. Schedule scribe or reader service at least 2 weeks in advance.
    E. Assure that any changes in arrangements are communicated directly to Disability Services Office by the instructor.
    F. Notify Disability Services Office **immediately** of any changes in exam place or time.

Appendix 5 (continued)

FIRST GROUP																	
Name	Init	SSN	Phone	Code	Employer	Hrs/Wk	Rate	From	To	School	Status	Race	Age	GPA F94	GPA S95	Grad	GPA F95
	A			P	Nucl Med	16	Afl	9/94	1/19	STCC	FT	Wht	34	3.70	3.70		3.62
						32	Afl	6/95	7/95	STCC							
						24	Afl	9/95	Pres	STCC							
	D			O	Med Asst	24	Afl	9/95	12/95	STCC	FT	Wht	38	2.50	2.70		
	S			L	WTCC	3.00	Vol					Af-Am	22	2.10	2.10	95	
	W			V						SC	PT	Wht	33	3.00	N/A		
	K			H	Burns Security	40				SC		Wht	62	0.00	3.00		
	M			L	JC Penney	25.00	5.00/Hr		Pres			Wht	26	2.40	N/A	93	
	C			L	US Army	FT	6.00/hr	11/95	Pres			Af-Am	28	2.30	2.10	95	
	L			P	Spfld Pub Schls	Sub	50/day	9/95	Pres	AIC	FT	Wht	23	2.00	N/A	95	
	J			P						STCC		Hsp	28	0.40	WU		
	S			P								Wht	23	2.60	N/A		
	B			O	N'ham Lin-Merc-Toyota	Coop	$6.50			STCC	Coop	Wht	34	2.50	N/A		
	J			P	Entre Computer	40	10/hr	9/95	Pres	STCC	PT	Wht	35	4.00	4.00	95	
	W			L						UMass	FT	Wht	28	3.40	0.00	95	
	S			Ps	STCC	8	$4.25			STCC	FT	Wht	44	3.20	3.10	D95	
	L			P	Hug Center	PT	16.00/18.00			STCC	FT	Wht	39	3.80	3.80	95	3.72
	M			O						STCC	FT	Wht	41	2.10	2.40		2.15
	P			V	Hickory Farms	8	$5.00	11/95	1/96			Wht	20	2.60	2.60	95	
					Peter Pan Bus	37	$6.50	4/96	Pres								
	A			Ps	STCC	15	$5.00			STCC	PT	Af-Am	26	2.60	2.60		2.45
	D			L	VanCort Instruments	40	$8.00					Wht	29	3.90	N/A	94	
	P			L						STCC		Wht	35	2.40	2.40		2.34
	P			L								Wht	24	1.70	1.70		
	P			O	Local 404	40	$10.00	11/95	Pres			Wht	42	3.60	N/A		
					Benefits pkg = $7/hr												
	S			P	STCC	12	$7.50					Wht	38	3.00	N/A		

Appendix 6

		Control Group GPA's				
Last Name	Init	SSN	Phone	GPA F94	GPA S95	GPA F95
	G				3.00	
	R				2.70	
	D				2.60	
	C				3.40	
	K				2.40	
	B				2.40	
	P				3.40	
	K				3.00	
	S				3.60	
	M				3.60	
	J				0.00	
	T				3.40	
	P				3.40	
	L				2.40	
	M				2.00	
	R				3.90	
	B				2.90	
	M				2.40	
	D				1.60	
	S				2.00	
	J				2.00	
	T				1.90	
	J				2.60	
	J				0.90	
	P				3.00	
	G				3.80	
	AM				3.80	
	M				1.20	
	L				3.60	
	RL				3.50	
	K				0.30	
	C				3.40	
	R				2.30	
	L				3.10	
	M				3.10	
	J				3.60	
	J				2.70	
	S				2.20	
	G				2.80	
	S				2.20	
	J				2.60	
	C				3.90	
	B				3.00	
	E				2.80	
	J				2.50	
	R				4.00	
	P				3.30	

Appendix 7

Numbers of Students Accepting Services								
Year	Resume	Cover Letters	Job Search	Volunteer Placement	Job Shadow	Career Counseling	Practice Interview	Totals
93-94								
94-95								
95-96								

Appendix 8